



POETRY

OUT LOUD

NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST

ARIZONA STATE

Recitation

FINALS 2007

**ARIZONA STATE CAPITOL
OLD SENATE CHAMBERS
THIRD FLOOR**

**1700 WEST WASHINGTON
PHOENIX, ARIZONA**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2007



Arizona
Commission
on the Arts



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

POETRY



FOUNDATION

Letter from the Director

"I have never seen a purple cow, I never hope to see one, but I can tell you anyhow that I would rather see than be one."

I can't remember where I first heard that short poem or who taught it to me; but to this day, it always brings me joy. I hold fond memories of my grandmothers, mother, and father singing songs to me, reciting snippets from poems and telling short and tall stories.

The written word and spoken word has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. The library, for me, was a summer

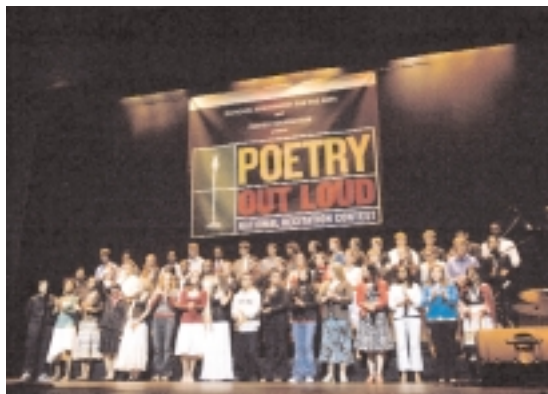
palace, where I signed up for the reading competition, totaling up books I read during those humid months. Those books I read hold great memories for me. Later, I graduated to those cool mail-order books from *Scholastic Readers*. My parents and I had a deal—for every two classic books that I selected, I could select one "off the wall" one. I remember *Hullabaloo*, a book with all the latest 1960's dance steps, and another book about the "monsters of the sea." My favorite of the so-called monsters was the anglerfish that used an appendage in the shape of a small fish above its mouth to lure other fish to their demise.

Today, I love reading poetry out loud—to a friend on a rainy day, to myself in the tub, on the couch for company, in bed, and to my dogs in the backyard.

The young people that you will see today reciting poems are learning so many valuable skills. They are learning the pure joy of the performing the written word, the power of their own voice, the ability to speak in front of friends and strangers, and the excitement of knowing they are leaders among their peers and fellow students.

Congratulations to all the students who are participating in the 2007 Poetry Out Loud Finals in Arizona. I hope that language—spoken and written—will be your trusted companion and give you great enjoyment for as long as you live.

Robert C. Booker
Executive Director
Arizona Commission on the Arts



Pictured: All 51 Poetry Out Loud finalists in Washington, DC. Courtesy of National Endowment for the Arts. Photo by James Kegley.

Introduction

The **National Endowment for the Arts** and **The Poetry Foundation** have partnered with State Arts Agencies to support **Poetry Out Loud**, which encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance. Poetry Out Loud seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by capitalizing on the latest trends in poetry—recitation and performance. The program builds on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, as seen in the slam poetry movement and the immense popularity of rap music among youth. Poetry Out Loud invites the dynamic aspects of slam poetry, spoken word, and theater into the English class. Through Poetry Out Loud, students can master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.

The winner of the **Poetry Out Loud Arizona** finals will receive \$200, and the winner's school library will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The second place finalist will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. Additional prizes for state contenders include books donated by local presses and poets. The state champion of the Poetry Out Loud Arizona finals will receive an all-expenses-paid trip (with a chaperone) to compete in the National Finals in Washington, DC, on April 30-May 1, 2007. The Poetry Out Loud National Finals will award a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends, with a \$20,000 college scholarship for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion.

For more information on Poetry Out Loud, visit www.poetryoutloud.org.



Welcome

Robert C. Booker, Executive Director
Arizona Commission on the Arts

Introduction

Dan Stone, Program Manager
National Endowment for the Arts

Introduction of Judges

Acknowledgement of State Finalist Participants

Kim Willey, Arts Learning Associate
Arizona Commission on the Arts

Warm Up Activity

Alison Marshall, Director of Arts Learning
Arizona Commission on the Arts

Recitations (2 Rounds)

Announcement of Winner and Prizes

Dan Stone & Robert C. Booker

Participating Schools

Arizona Cultural Academy, Phoenix

www.azacademy.org

Arizona School for the Arts, Phoenix

www.goasa.org

Cactus High School, Glendale

<http://cactushigh.peoriaud.k12.az.us/>

Catalina Foothills High School, Tucson

<http://www.cfsd.k12.az.us/schools/cfhs/>

Catalina Magnet High School, Tucson

<http://edweb.tusd.k12.az.us/Catalina/>

La Joya Community High School, Avondale

<http://www.tuhsd.org/LJHS/index.htm>

Red Mountain High School, Mesa

<http://www.mpsaz.org/rmhs/>

Sedona Red Rock High School, Sedona

<http://www.sedona.k12.az.us/socusd/highschool/srrhs.html>

Sinagua High School, Flagstaff

<http://www.flagstaff.k12.az.us/sinagua/>

Stapley Junior High School, Mesa

<http://www.mpsaz.org/stapley>

St. Gregory College Preparatory School, Tucson

<http://www.stgregoryschool.org/>

Tucson Magnet High School, Tucson

<http://edweb.tusd.k12.az.us/thms/>

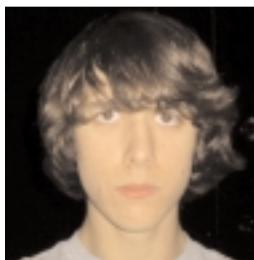
University High School, Tucson

<http://edweb.tusd.k12.az.us/uhs/>

Veritas Preparatory Academy, Phoenix

<http://www.veritasprepacademy.org/>

Student Finalists



Taylor Brady, University High School, 10th grade

"Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll

"Preludes" by T.S. Eliot

Taylor Brady is an avid member of the school drumline, percussion club, and band, in addition to participation in the film club, model united nations club, and volleyball program. He loves to read and write poetry, and his favorite styles are Classical and Victorian. He writes in this style as well, and finds it pleasing to take on the challenge of writing in intricate meter and rhyme scheme, while still putting forth a powerful message.



Julia Cavanaugh, St. Gregory College Preparatory School, 11th grade

"Requero" by Edna St. Vincent Millay

"Litany" by Billy Collins

Julia Cavanaugh has attended St. Gregory for five years. She is active in the music and drama departments, volunteers as a tutor for Sudanese refugees, and works as an assistant office manager at a doctor's office.



Khaerannisa Cortes, Arizona Cultural Academy, 12th grade

"I Am Learning to Abandon the World" Linda Pastan

"Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou

Khaerannisa Cortes, also known as "Nisa," was born in Jakarta, Indonesia. She is 16 years old and a senior at Arizona Cultural Academy. After 6 years at public school, she started high school at a parochial school. Currently, she is president of Student Council and editor of the Editorial Board. She has many hobbies, including scrapbooking and writing. In the fall, she will be attending ASU, majoring in pre-med and family and human development.



Indra Ekmanis, Sedona Red Rock High School, 12th grade

"Learning to Love America" by Shirley Geok-Lin Lim

"A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General" by Jonathan Swift

I chose "Learning to Love America" because I think the message of adapting to a new setting, accepting, and learning who we are is important to all people. "A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General" is a poem of a different genre that I found to be a humorous take on a rather grave situation—it is also filled with ironies. I chose this poem because it makes one think past the satire. This is my first experience participating in Poetry Out Loud, but it has been exhilarating thus far.



Rachel Goldschmid, Catalina Foothills High School, 9th grade

"If" by Rudyard Kipling

"Dulce et Decorum Est" by Wilfred Owen

I like to sing and I play classical guitar. I enjoy applying make-up and making clothes. I'm quiet until I find something to say. I chose the poems I did because I like them and I like Poetry Out Loud because I like poetry.

Student Finalists



Chelsea Halstead, Sinagua High School, 11th grade

"Mother to Son," by Langston Hughes

"Touch Me," by Stanley J. Kunitz

Chelsea Halstead has had major roles in several drama productions at Sinagua High School and is enrolled in the advanced creative writing class. She commented, "I selected the first poem (Mother to Son) because it is a beautiful interpretation of a mother's advice to her son. The second is beautiful because it tells such a real, convincing story of losing yourself, even in a sure marriage. I have enjoyed this experience; it has opened me up, but it was also very stressful."



Jonathan Holmes, Tucson Magnet High School, 9th grade

"Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe

"To the Desert" by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

I am Jonathan Holmes, and I am 15 years old. I attended a fine arts school in middle school and am going to Tucson High School to continue my career in music, drama, and creative writing. I wanted to do this contest so I could see just how good I am at this and how good I must become to pursue a professional career. I look forward to seeing everyone perform.



Michael Jara, Red Mountain High School, 11th grade

"The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" by Sir Walter Raleigh

"Harlem" by Langston Hughes

My name is Michael Steven Jara, and three words that describe me are hardworking, dedicated, and committed. My goal in life is to graduate from ASU with a master's degree in education and to get married. I am currently taking AP Spanish IV, AA Junior English, and Trigonometry, amongst others. My hobbies include playing guitar, playing soccer, reading, and doing community service. I think that Poetry Out Loud is a good way for high school students to learn and appreciate amazing poems.



Mark Jacobson, Arizona School for the Arts, 12th grade

"Hysteria" by Dionisio D. Martinez

"Discrimination" by Kenneth Rexroth

An actor at heart, Mark Jacobson is often found on the stage, having appeared in his school's fall and spring shows since freshman year. He has also participated in a number of youth and community theatre productions around the valley, garnering an AriZoni Award in the process. He has always had a passion for poetry and is honored to have the opportunity to compete at the state level for Poetry Out Loud. He plans to attend college somewhere in the fall. "Sham on!"



Jordan McAlpin, Cactus High School, 11th grade

"An Introduction to My Anthology" by Marvin Bell

"Hysteria" by Dioniso D. Martinez

I enjoy having a conversation with the audience. Last year I was thrown into this crazy whirlwind of poetry and I never expected I'd enjoy and appreciate the experience as much as I did. This year I have a high respect for poetry recitation. I have to thank Mrs. Susan Thompson for her insight and guidance in the realm of poetry.

Student Finalists



Mary Clare Mulhern, Veritas Preparatory Academy, 9th grade

"Flaxman" by Margaret Fuller

"Mending Wall" by Robert Frost

"Flaxman" reminds me of my school, whose name means "Truth." My school could have been modeled after this poem, they're so connected. In "Mending Wall" the person in it questions a cliché and doesn't accept it because it doesn't make sense to him. I am much the same. I question the world around me and the sayings in it before accepting or disregarding them. I learned to do this both at school and at home, which is a busy place filled with two loving parents and eight children, including myself.



Moniza Isabell Murillo, La Joya Community High School, 12th grade

"Fire and Ice" by Robert Frost

"What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why" by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Moniza Murillo is the daughter of Joe and Isabell Murillo. She loves to hang out with friends, draw, sing, and play sports. She particularly enjoys football and karate since she is very competitive, and is even a karate instructor for children.



Brian Nalisa, Catalina Magnet High School, 11th grade

"Famous" by Naomi Shihab Nye

"Father" by Edgar Albert Guest

Brian Nalisa immigrated from Africa, joining his mother and brothers in Tucson in 2005. He remembers the first book he read in English as a child was E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*. His life-long love of language—in theater, music, poetry, and literature, especially—has influenced his forays into acting and journalism. At Catalina Magnet High School, he is one of the anchorpersons on the CMHS Channel 1 affiliate, KCHT TV. His dream is to attend film school at USC.



Sarah Toller, Stapley Junior High School, 9th grade

"The Spider" by Richard Eberhart

"Famous" by Naomi Shihab Nye

Sarah Toller is 14 years old and in the ninth grade at Stapley Junior High School in Mesa, Arizona. She is on the National Academic State Championship Team and plays the viola.

Judges



Becky Byrkit, Poet

Ms. Byrkit's poems have appeared in *Best American Poetry 1997*, *Best of Exquisite Corpse 2000*, *Fever Dreams: Poets of the American Southwest*, as well as dozens of excellent literary journals. Her first book, *zealand*, was an Western States Book Award finalist. Ms. Byrkit has taught poetry on islands in Greece and Hawaii, and currently directs the Northern Arizona Book Festival.



Charles Jensen, Assistant Director; Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing, Arizona State University

Mr. Jensen holds an MFA in poetry from ASU and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Nonprofit Leadership and Management. He is the author of two chapbooks, including *Living Things*, which won the 2006 Frank O'Hara chapbook award, and is a recipient of a 2007 Artist's Project Grant from the Arizona Commission on the Arts. His poetry has appeared in *Bloom*, *The Journal*, *New England Review*, and *West Branch*. He is the founding editor of the online poetry magazine *LOCUSPOINT*, which explores creative work on a city-by-city basis.



Alan Pruitt, Artistic Director; Phoenix Theatre's Cookie Company

Mr. Pruitt directs Cookie Company, a troupe of professional adult actors performing for children. He also serves as the Director of Education Programs and Resources, and Accessibility Coordinator. He has been Phoenix Theatre's Playwright in Residence for the last 26 seasons. Mr. Pruitt has produced plays for Cookie Company, as well as Phoenix Symphony Family Concert Series, Phoenix Boys Choir, Dance Motion and Black Theatre Troupe. He is a roster artist with the Arizona Commission on the Arts and tours his one man show, *A Conversation with Ben* to schools across Arizona and the country.



Frances Sjoberg, Literary Director; University of Arizona Poetry Center

Ms. Sjoberg teaches creative writing at Imago Dei Middle School. She received an MFA from Warren Wilson Program for Writers and has published poems in *Alaska Quarterly*, *Barrow Street*, *Forklift, Ohio*, *Sonora Review*, *River City* and other magazines. She is a fellowship recipient from the Fund for Poetry in New York and the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation in Taos, New Mexico. At the Poetry Center, she is the editor/publisher of *VERSE! Poetry for Young Children*, a curriculum for preschool and elementary students.

Considering a Poem - An Understanding Experience

By Tina Blythe, Harvard Project Zero and Alison Marshall, Arizona Commission on the Arts

This activity is designed to help teachers explore and reflect upon ways that they can use classroom experiences to support understanding. The following format would work well with any poem. This activity focuses on giving students a way to experience poems more deeply.

Step One: Meeting the Poem. The word “meeting” encourages students to think of an introduction or the beginning of a relationship. They should not expect to know a poem after the first encounter any more than they would expect to know a person after a single meeting.

1. **Read the Poem.** Students read the poem silently to themselves, then a several students read it out loud, followed by another silent reading.
2. **Describe the Poem.** This step is about description only—students should withhold statements of personal taste and value judgments. No observation is too small or insignificant. This is a structured conversation that asks students what they noticed about the poem.
3. **Ask What Questions They Have about the Poem.** After carefully describing the poem, students then raise questions about it.

Step Two: Developing an Interpretation and Criteria for a Good Interpretation. Now comes the opportunity for further exploration. Students are charged with working in small groups to develop interpretations or representations of the poem using one of three possible approaches:

1. Creating a visual arts interpretation
2. Creating a musical interpretation
3. Creating an interpretation using dance/movement

Directions for this activity need not be overly specific. “Represent this poem using one of these three approaches” is usually sufficient. This work represents a first draft. Students will present their work to the rest of the class without explaining the work itself. Props and materials might be helpful to the group, such as simple noise-making implements, visual art supplies, or scarves.

After they have heard the directions, but before setting to work, students will collaborate with teachers to develop a first draft of criteria that captures their sense of what constitutes a good interpretation. These criteria are likely to be general at first.

Step Three: Sharing and Responding to the Interpretations. Once students have come up with their interpretations, each group performs or presents its work for the rest of the class. The audience responds following the steps they used in meeting the poem. First they describe what they saw or heard, and then they raise questions about the presentation or the poem. When all the questions have been asked, the presenting group members respond to the following question: “What did you hear in the audience’s questions and comments that surprised you or made you think about your work in a different way?”

Step Four: Revise Criteria. After the first draft representations have been made, students return to their initial set of criteria for a good interpretation, discuss the list and revise it as they’d like.

Step Five: Reading the Poem Again. Read the poem again, both silently and aloud. In discussion, you might comment on things they notice now. Did they find any answers to their initial questions? Have other questions emerged? Do they see things not captured in the interpretations?

Conclude or continue with the revision process (revising interpretations, presentations, refining criteria).

Meaning in poetry is negotiated over time, not only between readers and text, but also among a community of readers and text. Understanding is not simply a matter of “getting it,” but rather a matter of time and effort, consideration and creativity.

Poetry Resources

Recommended Books and Journals

The American Poetry Review

Published six times a year, *The American Poetry Review* contains a diverse amount of contemporary authors ranging from poetry to prose. Over the past 30 years, APR has helped to make poetry a more public art form without compromising the art of poetry. For more information, visit www.aprweb.org.

***Poetry Out Loud* by Robert Alden Rubin**

This easy-to-read book will help students, teachers, and poets understand poems more clearly. Every page of poetry has marginal notes highlighting, rhythm, rhyme meter, language, and sound. This book offers a diverse range of poetry to engage any reader.

***Poetry Speaks: Hear Great Poets Read Their Work from Tennyson to Plath* by Elise Paschen and Rebekah Presson Mosby**

Read along while you listen to 42 renowned poets recite selections from their own work. The book also includes photos and biographies of the poets and three CDs with recordings reflecting the pitch and tone of presenting a poem. A great resource for the Poetry Out Loud program.

***The Practice of Poetry: Writing Exercises from Poets Who Teach* by Robin Behn**

Contemporary poets contribute exercises to help writers develop poems. The book is broken down into chapters on form, metaphor, structure, sound, rhythm, and reflection. With tips about how to overcome writers block, this book guides a novice poet through the steps of creating a poem.

Websites

American Academy of Poets

A great resource for teachers, students, and poets. Lists resources ranging from audio guides, podcasts, discussion forums, and reading recommendations from fellow poets. www.poets.org

Modern American Poetry

Critical and historical essays and syllabi on modern American Poetry. Many of the works relate to poems in the *Oxford Anthology of Modern American Poetry*. www.english.uiuc.edu/maps

Poets & Writers

A great source for creative writers. The website offers information, support, and guidance for emerging poets, fiction, and creative non-fiction writers and funding for readings and workshops. www.pw.org

The Poetry Society

Non-profit organization devoted to fostering and promoting poetry in the US. Excerpts from *Crossroads* (official journal), sponsored events and information about poetry. www.poetrysociety.org

The Poetry Foundation

Publisher of *Poetry* magazine, the Poetry Foundation is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in American culture. www.poetryfoundation.org

Arizona Commission on the Arts

The state arts agency whose mission is to help Arizonans broaden, deepen and diversify their engagement with the arts, as creators, audiences and supporters, in ways that are satisfying and integral to their lives. The Commission provides programs and services to artists and arts organizations throughout Arizona. www.azarts.gov

National Endowment for the Arts

The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established; bringing the arts to all Americans; and providing leadership in arts education. The Endowment is the nation's largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases. www.nea.gov

Poetry Resources

Organizations

Arizona Book Festival

The statewide Arizona Book Festival is sponsored by the Arizona Humanities Council. It is a free event held to celebrate the book in all its forms, featuring a continuous program of panel discussions, readings, author talks, question and answer sessions, and theatrical performances. Attendees can attend the presentations, buy books, have books appraised, and there is a special children's area with a program of hands-on activities and storytelling. For more information, visit www.azbookfestival.org.

Arizona State University Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing

The Piper Center offers a multitude of programs, opportunities, and resources for writers at all levels of experience, such as the Distinguished Visiting Writers Series, the annual ASU Writers Conference, international exchange and fellowships programs for graduate students, workshops and classes for the community, numerous student internships, and the Piper Resource Center Library. The Piper Center publishes *Marginalia*, a quarterly literary magazine, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, an award-winning literary and art journal, and *Lux*, an undergraduate literary review. For more information, visit www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter.

Arizona State University Young Writer's Program

The Young Writer's Program provides arts-based programs for Arizona students in grades 4-12. Master of Fine Arts students from ASU perform residency-based work in schools and community-based organizations, addressing important writing concepts in the Arizona Arts Standards and teaching students how to express themselves through the creative process of writing by promoting confidence and imagination. For more information, visit www.asu.edu/ywp.

Hassayampa Institute for Creative Writing

Co-sponsored by Yavapai College and Sharlot Hall Museum, the Institute holds a week-long conference in the cool pines of Prescott, Arizona every July, designed to develop and hone literary skills, as well as foster community among writers. The conference allows participants to work with nationally-recognized authors in a professional, but informal setting that includes morning workshops, afternoon panels and discussions devoted to broader cultural issues, and evening readings in which featured authors share their work. For more information, visit www.jc.edu/hassayampa.nsf.

NorAZ Poets

An organization of Northern Arizona poets who have created several programs in the community. The Alzheimer's Poetry Project is designed to help stimulate brain activity by using poetry that was read and memorized during the patient's younger years. The "Young Voices, Be Heard" series encourages students to create their own work with constructive feedback, writing exercises and performance coaching. For more information, visit www.norazpoets.org.

Northern Arizona Book Festival

The Northern Arizona Book Festival promotes the union of literacy and the fine art of literature in a meaningful and relevant way to the peoples of Northern Arizona and the greater Southwest. The Festival brings a diverse group of authors to Flagstaff each year for a weekend of readings, workshops, panel discussions, and other literary events. For more information, visit www.nazbookfestival.org.

University of Arizona Poetry Center

The University of Arizona Poetry Center provides an extensive poetry library, free readings and lectures, community classes, poets-in-the-schools programs, poets-in-the-prisons programs, contests, exhibitions, and online resources. For more information, visit www.poetrycenter.arizona.edu.

Tucson Poetry Festival

Every year in April, acclaimed poets from all over the country converge on Tucson to present their latest works, participate in panel discussions and conduct workshops on the literary art. Open-mike readings give poets of lesser stature a chance to try their works and maybe stake their claims to fame. For more information, visit www.tucsonpoetryfestival.org.

Sponsors



Arizona Commission on the Arts



National Endowment for the Arts



The Poetry Foundation

For more information about Poetry Out Loud Arizona, contact Kim Willey at (602) 771-6521 or email kwilley@azarts.gov.